

Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority

Work Session – 9:00 a.m.

Oakville Community Hall
107 E. Oak St.
Oakville, WA

June 21, 2012 - Meeting Notes

Board Members Present: Jim Cook, City of Aberdeen; Mark Swartout, Town of Bucoda; Terry Willis, Grays Harbor County Commissioner; Ron Averill, Lewis County Commissioner; Merlin MacReynold, City of Chehalis; Dan Thompson, City of Oakville; Dolores Lee, Town of Pe Ell; Edna Fund, City of Centralia; Karen Valenzuela, Thurston County Commissioner

Board Members Excused: Vickie Raines, City of Cosmopolis; Lionel Pinn, City of Napavine; Ken Estes, City of Aberdeen ~~Aberdeen~~ **Montesano**

Others Present: Please see sign in sheets

Handouts/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Work plan for 2012-2013
- Staffing Memo
- ESB 5127 Jobs Now Act, Section 313
- ESB 5127 Project Descriptions
- ESB 5127 Implementation

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Vice Chair Valenzuela called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. and explained that an AWC function kept some of the members from attending. She thanked Mr. Thompson for making the arrangements for the meeting room and supplying refreshments. Mayor Norskog welcomed the Flood Authority.

2. Introductions

Self-Introductions were made by all attending.

3. Feedback on OFM Report/Ruckelshaus Center Workshop – Jim Kramer

Mr. Kramer explained that the legislature requires that the Governor's Office put together a fact-finding report on the consideration of flood damage in the Chehalis River Basin. The draft will be out in early July and finalized in August. Ultimately the governor will make a recommendation to the legislature as to which projects will be implemented with support from the Flood Authority, the Chehalis Tribe and other jurisdictions. The purpose of the two-day workshop last week was to get a sense of policy issues and where there is concurrence and differences. He asked for feedback.

Commissioner Willis stated she had attended the workshops and open houses in Grays Harbor County. There was a lot of good information at the workshops and the public outreach meetings were very helpful. A lot of information was collected from citizens about what their concerns were. Without being led, they generally followed the same path as the Flood Authority: start at the mouth and follow through.

Mr. Kramer stated all of that information would be included in the first draft.

Mr. Gordon stated there were about 72 flood plain landowners at the meetings. He stated Ms. Fowler discovered a way to 'fly' the computer up the valley and age pictures back to 1990 through Google Earth. Pictures showed the river moving toward to Mary's River Lumber over time. It was a great exercise and brought a lot of good ideas. The result was far better than he had hoped.

Commissioner Willis stated that people understood the implications of flooding for the whole area after that demonstration.

Mr. Nelson, WDFW, stated there was a perception that the government will not let people do something to the river. There are some things that can be done in the river; some things were done in the past and they worked. He stated the government will work with people and he tried to dispel those feelings about the river.

Mr. Kramer stated at the soil conservation meeting in Adna there was a common theme: stop the erosion of river banks. It would be helpful if agencies could put together a list of best practices, what makes sense and what does not make sense. Currently people who live in the basin do not feel empowered to take responsibility and they want to take responsibility. There are places where things cannot be done, but permission is allowed all the time.

Commissioner Averill stated he was pleased to see the Quinault Tribe participating at the June policy workshop. They were denied membership to the Flood Authority, with reasons. The Flood Authority values their coming to the meetings; they did participate in the fish study.

Mr. Kramer stated he had spoken to Keith Phillips and Keith is working to initiate a government to government discussion between the State and Quinault Indian Nation.

4. Review and Discussion of 2012-2013 Work Plan – Lara Fowler

Ms. Fowler brought up the Basin on Google Earth and gave a "tour" of the Basin and summarized what has been accomplished.

The tour started at the mouth of the river (there is now a hydraulic model for that location). The Aberdeen area has been discussed; Wishkah Road; the Cosmopolis dike was visited as well as the Mary's River Lumber site. Ms. Fowler showed changes in the river from 1991 to the present time at that location.

The tour moved further upstream, showing that the tidal influence ends at the Satsop River, and moved through the basin to Pe Ell.

Ms. Fowler distributed a paper showing general accomplishments over the past year by all of the sub committees. The tours in all of the areas have been very helpful in understanding what is happening in the various locations.

Specific project accomplishments include the Early Warning System, the Fisheries Impact Study and Enhancement Study, basin-wide hydraulic modeling, and the development of the OFM report. The handout also showed key events by date, starting in July of 2011 and going through June of 2012.

Mr. MacReynold stated he would like to share this with the Chehalis City Council and it should go on the website so people know that the Flood Authority has been very productive.

a. Work plan for 2012-2013

Ms. Fowler quickly went through the work plan through 2013. She stated there needs to be a discussion regarding the frequency of future meetings and if a meeting is necessary in August.

Mr. Swartout stated that Thurston County had a resolution to designate October as flood awareness month. He suggested that all the counties coordinate with that. Vice Chair Valenzuela liked the idea and suggested that the Education/Outreach Committee think of a way to reach the public with October as the target date.

Commissioner Averill stated there is a \$5 million jobs bill that is to be used by July 2013 and it is evident that the Flood Authority will not spend all the money. There needs to be a discussion about encumbering it and rolling it over to the next biennium. There is also a need to find funding to move the Flood Authority forward. The Flood Authority is moving into the last half of this biennium without a lot of money. There is about \$47 million that was intended for the Twin Cities Project which is probably going away. When that money was provided in 2008 a stipulation was if the US Army Corps of Engineers Twin Cities project went away the money could be used for other projects.

Commissioner Willis stated that during one of the meetings it was suggested that a team be put together to handle the permitting process in order to keep moving projects forward to stay in compliance.

Ms. Fowler stated she would add what has been talked about to the work plan.

b. Potential Budget for 2012-2013

Ms. Fowler referred to the task paper and the money that would be remaining at the end of June.

Task 1 – There will be about \$10,000 from the hydraulic modeling that could be carried over. All contracts end on June 30. What are the steps that would carry the contracts forward?

Task 2 – There are still some gages to install for the Early Warning System. Commissioner Averill stated WEST's contract is done. Their contract need to be extended.

Task 3 – There will be no money left for fisheries; the study is done and there is no need to extend the contract.

Task 4 – This is a place holder. Can this money be re-allocated to be used elsewhere?

Task 5 – Alternative Measures – The OFM report will be completed.

Task 7 – Facilitation – this needs discussion.

Task 8 – Commissioner Averill stated Lewis County has been very careful with its expenses. It is unlikely that any more will be needed.

Commissioner Willis stated regarding the \$100,000 in Task 4, what came out of the public meetings was the need to conduct more model analysis and design work on potential projects in the lower Basin. As we get into projects we may find we have a use for those dollars.

Ms. Fowler stated there is a one-time cost for the inundation maps. There has been no answer yet if OFM could cover that cost.

Commissioner Averill stated the Flood Authority has some latitude with transferring 10% of funding to another purpose. Lewis County will need to go to OFM for a supplement.

Vice Chair Valenzuela stated she and Chairman Raines will be meeting with OFM on Monday and these questions will be asked.

5. Discussion of on-going O&M for Early Warning System

Ms. Fowler stated different scenarios for operations and maintenance have been discussed in the past. WEST put together a budget for early warning and maintenance. If the work is not done by WEST the cost could be lower. There was also a discussion about dividing the O&M between entities.

Commissioner Averill stated a new gage is going in at the reservation and it needs to be maintained. It's possible the reservation could pay for it but it is part of the basin-wide system.

Vice Chair Valenzuela asked if there is a way to tap into the \$5 million to pay for the O&M for the short term. She thought the state should consider paying long term.

Mr. MacReynold asked if the \$1000 from the small cities was a realistic number. Ms. Lee stated Pe Ell is struggling to pay its current bills. The city cannot take on another expense and even the \$230 is not doable.

Mr. Thompson stated he discussed this with the Oakville clerk. If the citizens will truly benefit then the city can afford it.

Mr. MacReynold asked if there is an interest in keeping WEST to do the maintenance. It is taking a long time to implement the system; is this a contract we want to continue or do we want an alternate approach? Commissioner Averill stated there are only two gages. The WEST system has ten gages; Lewis County has 10 USGS gages on which it pays maintenance. He would like to see Department of Emergency Management (EEM) pay for them but EEM must look at it from precedence as paying for all gage maintenance in the state would be cost prohibitive.

Mr. Swartout did not know if Bucoda could afford \$1000. He would have to take it back to council. Regarding the DNR gage in Thurston County, he did not feel anyone in Thurston County had the technology to maintain that type of gage.

Ms. Fowler stated there were gages that needed to be recalibrated after the snow in January. Dr. Curtis is the connection to WEST and he has been very responsive. This is a cutting edge system and others are looking at it. Does that mean it will open opportunities for funding?

6. Discussion of ESB 5127 Jobs Now Projects, Next Steps

Ms. Fowler recapped the Jobs Now Act, explaining that there are \$5 million allocated for projects to alleviate flooding that must be approved by the Flood Authority and the Tribes. Ms. Fowler provided a paper on the implementation that was sent out to the Flood Authority members and distributed at the meeting. She stated there will be a discussion with OFM and the Chehalis Tribe, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Flood Authority on Monday. The governor's office has the funding available now to be spent by June, 2013. The goal is to get jobs on the ground. She clarified that money could be used for design, engineering and permitting, but the governor wants the bulk of it to go for jobs.

The Flood Authority has identified a number of opportunities throughout the basin for projects and additional information is being developed. The projects must be reviewed by the Flood Authority and the Chehalis Tribe.

A Project Descriptions paper had been sent out and those projects were summarized.

Commissioner Averill stated the Chehalis Airport levee is estimated at approximately \$1.2 million. It would shore up the levee on the inside; it would not change the footprint of the levee, but allow future improvements.

The Adna levee is not actually a levee but a railroad berm. Lewis County engineers estimate it will cost about \$250,000 to restore the berm to the original state and would solve most of the flooding that Adna experienced in 2007. This cost would include permitting costs.

Ms. Fowler asked about the levee at the north end of Bucoda. Mr. Swartout stated he had no more information but would look into it. It needs to be designed and a lot of work needs to be done before it would be ready for this bill.

Commissioner Willis stated the Projects Committee looked at Wishkah Rd and did not feel raising homes fit the funding. Replacing the culvert is not feasible because a transmission line runs through it; these two sub-projects were taken off of the list.

Humptulips Dike Road does fit the criteria of funding. Mr. Cook stated he had more information from Aberdeen Public Works that he would provide.

Trail/Dike behind Burger King, the dike bank of Wishkah Rd and the Market Street dike projects all need more information from the City of Aberdeen with respect to the selection criteria.

The Southside Dike certification would mean jobs if brought up to certification. Mr. Cook believed the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) installed the dike but it would require FEMA certification.

The Sickman Ford Bridge is being developed by the Chehalis Tribe.

Commissioner Willis stated there is a need for larger culverts to evacuate water out of the system. At some point there may be a need to add a new project for South Bank Rd.

Mr. Gordon stated it needs modeling and engineering but there are concerns about Porter. There have been changes to the road that might relieve problems at Porter. If S. Elma is opened up, what would that mean above and below? Some modeling and design would be helpful.

Ms. Fowler asked if there are other culverts that could be replaced and would there be flood benefit in doing so.

The Project Committee and OFM will work directly with the conservation districts for critter pads.

The Satsop floodplain restoration project would open the gravel bars at a cost of approximately \$1 million. Commissioner Willis has the Corps' evaluation. The \$1 million was for feasibility and she thought this figure was high.

7. Public Comment

Ms. Kathy Elder, Oakville resident, asked if the ramifications of closing the Sickman Ford Bridge had been addressed. She was concerned about emergency vehicles getting through during construction. Mr. Thompson stated the questions might be answered during the tour later today.

Mr. Bart Gernhart stated Washington State Department of Transportation has not committed to doing hydrology but it will do cost estimates and has the budget; it would not need Flood Authority money.

8. Tour Overview

Mr. Thompson explained how to get to the Sickman Ford Bridge and Harris Creek. Chairman Burnett from the Chehalis Tribe would be there to explain what those projects would entail.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:16 a.m.